

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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UNCINCSO J2 QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 5448

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, BL
SUBJECT: STATUS OF BOLIVIA ELECTION RESULTS

REF: LA PAZ 5432

1. AS OF JULY 11, BOTH THE RESULT AND THE EXTENT OF
IRREGULARITIES IN BOLIVIAN ELECTIONS REMAIN UNDETERMINED.
CLEAR JUDGMENTS ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE POSSIBLE FOR MANY
DAYS YET, GIVEN THE CLOSENESS OF THE VOTE, SLOWNESS OF
MANUAL TABULATION AND THE LARGE NUMBER OF ALLEGED IRREGULAR-
ITIES THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COURT WILL HAVE TO REVIEW
BEFORE AUTHENTICATING VOTING RESULTS.

2. PEREDA HAS CLAIMED VICTORY FOR HIS PRO-GOVERNMENT
CANDIDACY. LEFTIST HERNAN SILES HAS CLAIMED VICTORY FOR
HIMSELF AND THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT FORCES. BOTH CLAIMS ARE
INVALID AT THIS POINT. ONE GROUP OF INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS,
INVITED BY THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY ON HUMAN RIGHTS, HAS
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DENOUNCED WIDESPREAD IRREGULARITIES AT THE POLLING PLACES--
WHICH IS CERTAINLY TRUE--AND SOME HAVE PRIVATELY IMPLIED THAT THE
ELECTORAL RESULT MAY BE FRAUDULENT--WHICH IS AT BEST A PREMATURE
JUDGMENT SINCE ONLY 30-35 PERCENT OF THE RETURNS HAVE
BEEN REPORTED BY THE NATIONAL COURT AND ITS DILIGENCE IN
DEALING WITH CHALLENGED VOTES HAS NOT YET BEEN DETERMINED.

3. THE VOTES TABULATED SO FAR (REFTEL)

MAY NOT BE INDICATIVE OF THE FINAL OUTCOME. THESE ARE LARGELY URBAN VOTES AND IF THE RURAL AREA IS MORE PREDOMINANTLY PRO-PEREDA (OR LESS LIKELY PRO-SILES) THIS WILL CHANGE THE RESULT. IT COULD CONCEIVABLE STILL MAKE PEREDA PRESIDENT BY DIRECT ELECTION WITH 50-PLUS PERCENT OF THE POPULAR VOTE. IT MAY WELL NOT GIVE HIM A MAJORITY IN THE CONGRESS, BECAUSE OF THE STRONG REGIONAL OPPOSITION HE FACED WITH ONE OPPOSITION CANDIDATE OR ANOTHER UPSETTING HIM IN AS MANY AS FOUR OF THE NINE DEPARTMENTS.

4. ON THE BASIS OF THESE PARTIAL RETURNS SOME IMPORTANT TRENDS ARE REASONABLY CLEAR. MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN BOLIVIA WAS NOT SO POPULAR AS BELIEVED; CLOSE TO HALF OF THE BOLIVIAN VOTERS APPEAR TO HAVE VOTED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER AGAINST CONTINUITY CANDIDATE GENERAL JUAN PEREDA. IN THIS SENSE SILES HAS HALF A POINT WHEN HE ADDS UP HIS, PAZ' AND BERNAL'S VOTES AND TALKS OF AN OPPOSITION TRIUMPH. YET IN TERMS OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY HE IS WRONG, SINCE IN ALL DEPARTMENTS EXCEPT LA PAZ, POTOSI, AND CHUQUISACA, THE ANTI-PEREDA VOTE WENT OVERWHELMINGLY NOT TO THE LEFTIST COALITION OF HERNAN SILES, BUT TO THE MODERATES VICTOR PAZ AND RENE BERNAL WHO ARE PHILOSOPHICALLY CLOSER TO PEREDA'S PALE, NATIONALIST PRAGMATISM THAN TO SILES' MORE IDEOLOGICAL AND CLASS-ORIENTED PROGRAM.

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5. IF THE ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT AND/OR THE FORMATION OF A WORKING CONGRESSIONAL MAJORITY REQUIRES COALITION NEGOTIATIONS, PEREDA SHOULD FIND IT EASIER TO STRIKE A DEAL WITH PAZ OR BERNAL OR BOTH THAN WITH SILES. PAZ AND BERNAL FORCES COULD FEEL THEY WOULD BE EATEN UP AS A MINOR PARTNER OF A STRONG LEFTIST COALITION DOMINATED BY LABOR AND SOME CAMPESINO ORGANIZATIONS. THE STRONG COMMUNIST PARTY ROLE IN SILES' COALITION WILL NOT APPEAL EITHER. PERSONALLY, VICTOR PAZ PLAYING SECOND FIDDLE TO HERNAN SILES WOULD BE GALLING. ONE FACTOR WILL BE PUSHING THE THREE ANTI-PEREDA CANDIDATES TOGETHER. ALL OF BERNAL'S AND PAZ' COMPLAINTS OF VOTING IRREGULARITIES WILL BE DIRECTED AGAINST PEREDA SINCE HE WAS THEIR ONLY STRONG OPPONENT IN THE DEPARTMENTS WHERE THEY RAN WELL, BUT SECOND (COCHABAMBA AND TARIJA IN PARTICULAR). IF THE FEUDS OVERCHALLENGED VOTES ARE VERY BITTER THIS COULD AFFECT ANY POSSIBLE COALITION NEGOTIATIONS.

6. AS TO VOTING IRREGULARITIES, EVERY BOLIVIAN ELECTION SINCE UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE HAS BEEN A RAGGED ONE AND SO WAS THIS ONE. WHETHER IT WAS BETTER OR WORSE IS A JUDGMENT THAT CANNOT BE CALLED YET. THERE ARE CERTAINLY A LARGE

NUMBER OF ALLEGED AND LIKELY IRREGULARITIES THAT THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COURT WILL HAVE TO CONSIDER IN DECIDING WHETHER TO COUNT OR ANNUL VOTES FROM MANY POLLING PLACES.
--PAZ ESTENSSORO HAS ACCUSED ARMY OFFICIALS OF TAMPERING WITH VOTES CAST FOR HIS SLATE IN SANTA CRUZ.

--PDC OFFICIALS HAVE CLAIMED SEVERAL OF THEIR REPRESENTATIVES IN COCHABAMBA WERE UNLAWFULLY DETAINED ON ELECTION DAY.

--SILES AND PEREDA BACKERS HAVE ACCUSED EACH OTHER OF COERCION, INTIMIDATION, AND DESTRUCTION OF BALLOTS AT THE POLLS.

--PEREDA HAS ACCUSED SILES OF USING FUNDS PROVIDED BY CONFIDENTIAL

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INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST ORGANIZATIONS TO "BUY" VOTES AND NOTARY PUBLICS (WHO AUTHENTICATE ELECTORAL RESULTS).

--THERE ARE MANY ALLEGED INSTANCES OF POLLING PLACES WHERE THE SILES FORCES REMOVED ALL THE PEREDA BALLOT FORMS AND WHERE THE PEREDA FORCES DID THE OPPOSITE, FORCING VOTERS TO GO ELSEWHERE.

7. WE ARE KEEPING TABS ON ALL THESE ACCUSATIONS AND, INsofar AS THEY APPEAR TO HAVE SUBSTANCE, WILL WATCH CAREFULLY THE ELECTORAL COURT'S REACTION TO THEM. THE AMBASSADOR HAS ALSO CONSULTED CLOSELY ON THIS GENERAL SITUATION WITH INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS, POLITICAL PARTIES AND OTHER INTERESTED AMBASSADORS, PARTICULARLY THE VENEZUELAN. AT THIS POINT, THE BEST COURSE SEEMS TO BE TO LOOK TO THE INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS AND THE POLITICAL PARTIES TO PUT MAXIMUM PRESSURE ON THE BOLIVIAN ELECTORAL APPARATUS, PARTICULARLY THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COURT, TO DEAL WITH ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES. ANY EXPRESSION OF OUR AND TOHER GOVERNMENTS' CONCERN SHOULD BE SAVED UNTIL A) THE FACTS ARE CLEARER AND B) WE HAVE AN INDICATION OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COURT IS DOING ITS JOB.
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